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No 358.

AWAY FROM HOME

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

I sit in the gathering twilight,
And hear in the street below,
Strange voices, and hurrying footsteps,
As if the world were all a-wake.
Here, in this great, wide city,
A stranger, sit apart,
As lonely as if a dweller
In the desert's dreary heart.

But the din dies out of the twilight,
And my thoughts, like birds, fly home,
Where father sits by the firelight,
With thoughts of the ones who roam.
I can see the red light play on his face,
Strands from his hair silver hair,
As he whispers the dear names over
In a way that is half a prayer.

He is sitting there with his Bible
Open upon his knee.
And I know that the sweet old chapters
Are blent with his thoughts of me.

Oh, though that is sweet as Heaven,
Wherever my feet may roam,
There is one true heart to love me,
And pray for me at home.

I know what he sees in the firelight,
By his strange and far-off look,
As if he were the vision of a dream.
He has read in the dear old Book.

Closely by the gates of Heaven
He sees my mother stand,

And to him, in the flash of the firelight,
She waves a beckoning hand.

Oh, tenderest heart, and truest,
Your thoughts are in Heaven and here.
Of the friends in the two worlds, father,
The world where we are near.

And he prays that when life is ended,
And no more our footsteps roam,

In the world that is over yonder.

He may have us all at home.

The miles may be long between us,
But be they many or few,
Your love will reach over all distance,
And help me to be true.

And the thought will be sweet with comfort,
With you to say, "I may roam."

That there's one true heart to love him
And pray for him at home.

The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER

CHAPTER X.

THE KERCHEVALS.

THREE months have passed since we dropped the curtain upon the wild scene of Cordelia Valrose's capture by the Arab emir at Wady Zebid.

We lift the curtain, this sweet October evening, upon a weirdly dissimilar scene.

It is a place called the Death Gulch, in Wisconsin, and by right of the mysterious deed done there, which presently turned a myriad eyes upon the obscure spot, otherwise never heard of, it deserves a conscientious description.

The Death Gulch is a valley with a worn-out silver mine in it; there is also a lake in it, walled in on every side by a grim facade of rocks, except at one end, where a single wooden house then stood, surrounded by a foiled attempt at a farm.

This lake—I have scarcely language to present it to my readers' imaginations, such a combination of horrors was it—was certainly a curious freak of Nature's. It was a sheet of black, motionless, currentless, dead water, thickened with green slime, and teeming with the most monstrous forms of vegetation: The acme of submarine hideousness wriggled and swarmed and seethed in its rank-smelling depths, as if Nature herself hid them deep, ashamed of their foulness. It was encircled by a rampart of bare cliffs, the faces of which were terribly stained and smeared, and blotted with red, green, and black mould, or, possibly, by the various oxides in the stone, suggesting to the startled stranger sickening ideas of massacre and violence.

At the feet of these cliffs ran a strip of rank black mud, a species of soil not to be met elsewhere in all the Western States, and looked upon by all the neighboring farmers as something supernatural therefore. Out of this alien hot-bed a mass of vegetation, as foreign sprung up every season in riotous profusion—great crawling, serpent-like vines, which produced mammoth clusters of watery, viscid poison-grapes, trees that distorted themselves into abnormal growths, all slimy with ooze and swathed with unwholesome funguses, vast flaring flowers that diffused overpowering odors, and, wriggling continually in and out of the dank moss, innumerable little black snakes, with a white ring round their necks, spread the terror of the dreary place wherever its name was uttered.

The very air was heavy with malaria, the very sky above it was ever sad and umbrage, never clear, never blue, but always blurred by clammy, discolored vapors. It seemed to be the haunt and home of all the diseases, the misfortunes, and the crimes that ever originated in Wisconsin, or so the gypsies were wont to say.

At the extremity of the lake—which was four or five miles in length and two broad—stood the solitary house before mentioned.

It was a wooden erection, of age far past its prime; it was blackened by the snows and fogs of the passing years; its planks were visibly rotting away, and it swayed forward, as if it would fall before the first heavy storm-blust which stirred the stagnant atmosphere—a deliverance which, however, never came—so the old hotel stood year by year, only sinking a little deeper into the ooze which was imperceptibly sucking it down.

A ruined barn flanked the house. The midnight wind had a habit of moaning through its weather-blanched clapboards and crumbling key-holes like the wall of a woman in mortal grief or pain—much to the discomfiture of everybody possessed of a speck of reverence. (I quote from the gossips.) A few, a very few acres of arable land stretched behind the buildings into the valley, a dark, water-logged plain, where the fruits of the field either burst into rank-flavored and monster growths, or rotted in the seed in the spongy soil, just as it chanced. The



"Look out, you wicked hearts. I'll defend my poor helpless father's honor with every breath I draw!"

nearest town was ten miles distant, and only to be reached by the farmer's rickety, one-horse buggy crawling through a wilderness of muskito-infested shrubbery up to the hubs in seething black mud. In fact, had the most ascetic recluse searched the world over, he could not have discovered a spot more desolate, and, as it would seem, more God-forgotten, than this Death Gulch.

Ten years ago a man had come with his family from Virginia, and had settled there.

It was Arch's grandfather's act, done in a fit of despair, and vainly repented ever since.

He had been a gentleman of fashion and means, had suffered reverses, had succumbed to adversity, and had perfected the ruin by parting with his last dollar in exchange for this luckless farm in the Death Gulch, tempted by its cheapness, and buoyed up by his utter ignorance of agriculture.

He had a wife, two daughters, and a son, and his name was—

JONAS KERCHEVAL.

It was about five o'clock of the evening, and Anne, the eldest daughter, a dark-faced gypsy of twenty-one, was washing the supper-dishes, while her mother sat by the wide hearth, busily knitting those coarse woolen socks, which the farmers of the West are wont to wear during their rigor of winter. Josie, the next child, a flaxen-haired fairy of seventeen, was engaged in darning about the bare, but scrupulously neat room, now twisting a fold of the coarse window curtain into a more graceful position, now stopping at the camay's cage to watch the drowsy songster, and anon flitting to the little mirror, that hung between the windows, to twine her flossy ringlets round her pretty fingers, or to prink her azure ribbons more coquettishly at the creamy throat.

The only boy, Edwin, or rather Ned, a wild, harum-scarum, nobble-de-hoy of fifteen, had flung himself on the floor by the fire, and with his brown face gradually turning lobster-red under the heat to which he was subjecting it, and his horzy hands buried in the rough hair of an immense bulldog which sprawled at his side, he seemed to sleep.

Jonas Kercheval sat at the table, his elbows resting on it, his head supported on his spread hands, and his eyes fixed on vacancy.

He was pale and haggard; his eyes had sunk into two caverns, from which they looked out with an expression of patient endurance and helpless suffering that was utterly pitiable; his chest was hollow, and his jet-black hair was thickly sprinkled with white already, though his age was scarcely fifty yet.

"My poor Margaret!" almost sobbed he. "If you knew—ah! if you only knew me as I know myself, you would curse me to my face and forsake me."

"Oh, don't say so!" pleaded she: "why should you reproach yourself with the misfortunes which Providence has seen fit to send upon us? Surely never man worked so hard, or faced death so bravely, or went to work again so perseveringly as you!"

"My poor Margaret!" almost sobbed he. "If you knew—ah! if you only knew me as I know myself, you would curse me to my face and forsake me."

"That I never would," she answered, quietly:

and drawing his anguished face down to her shoulder, she caressed the desperate man most tenderly, while she whispered sweet wifely endearments in his ear.

The three children of the ill-fated couple had watched this scene with bated breath, their bold, bright faces brilliant with enthusiasm.

"Father and mother," said she, "I'm going to speak up once and for all. It's all nonsense to tell Josie she must not go home when we might be earning her bread, and maybe helping you along a bit, too, in some of the neighbors' families. If I've been asked to go to service once, I've been asked a hundred times; Josie, too, I'm twenty-one now, and—and—I'm a-going."

"Service, indeed!" cried the silver voice of Josie: "not for me, thank you. I guess I can do better than that," and she peered into her sister's face quizzically. Anne flushed, then grew fearfully pale.

"If you can, Josie," said she, very gently, "be sure that nobody will be gladder than I."

"Listen to me, Anne," said her father, looking at her with tears in his eyes. "You have sacrificed all your life as far as it has gone for my sake; you've been a devoted daughter, and all I've been able to give you in reward has been a love that few men feel for their most idolized children."

"As he said this, his wife's eyes shone through grateful tears. "Lately I've noticed that the young fellow Arran has been coming here, and that you've kept out of his way."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Josie, spinning a pin.

"He comes for—for—for—" faltered Anne, averting her face.

"He came at first for you," said her father, "and you discouraged him because you were too generous to forsake your poor, unlucky father."

"Well, I'm sure!" pouted Josie, her delicate cheeks flushing and her gem-blue eyes flashing: "as if I wouldn't do just as much for you as Nan! And he never came to see her! It was always me! Wasn't it, Nannie? Tell them it was."

"Always you," said Anne, faintly, her face still averted.

"And when we're married," continued the

starting to his feet as if she had stung him. "I'm not righteous, that's where it is; I expect no mercy from God, much less his miraculous intervention in my behalf."

"Alas!" said she, looking upon him with infinite pity and tenderness, "neither of us have any right to expect anything from God as our daily sins exceed condemnation—"

"Silence! I command you!" exclaimed he, furiously: "you know nothing about this matter!"

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piercing as the flash of steel; his countenance was somewhat shrouded from view by the brim of his traveling hat and the folds of a light muffler which he wore thrown negligently around his neck and shoulders.

The master of the house was the first to regain his presence of mind. With somewhat of his old gentlemanly grace he stepped forward, exclaiming:

"Will you enter, sir? We are rough here, but a traveler is always welcome."

The stranger did not move, but fastening his penetrating gaze upon Korcheval, said sternly:

"For I have been a witness of the scene which has just transpired here. Pardon the intrusion, but I have come from the ends of the earth to discover Jonas Korcheval and the circumstances by which he is surrounded. It appears that I have lit upon you in one of the most unhappy crises of your most unhappy life."

"Two innocent young hearts are just about to be crushed under the wheels of your evil destiny. Even your prayers and tears cannot avert the sacrifice. Miserable man, what would you not give now to blot out the past?"

Korcheval gazed at the mysterious stranger aghast, as indeed they all did, but presently realizing the full meaning of his words, a fearful awe spread his attenuated features, and he stumbled forth, in great agitation:

"In God's name, sir, who are you?"

"I am one," answered the stranger, "who saw alive, three months since, him with whom you made that weak and cowardly compact twenty years ago."

As he uttered these words in an inflexible voice, Jonas Korcheval—in the midst of an involuntary gesture imploring him to desist—fell on the floor in a swoon.

Baron Berthold had made one of his moves in the game of Warren-Guilderland.

CHAPTER XII.

ARTFUL JOSIE.

NATURALLY, every one gathered round the insomniac man, and for the moment the stranger was forgotten.

When he was remembered, he had vanished, and Arran, stepping to the door, with the intention, it must be confessed, of calling him to account pretty sharply, only beheld his distant figure riding a powerful black horse out of the Gulch, at a slashing pace.

Having assisted the terrified and bewildered family to convey Korcheval to his bed, Arran was loitering about the yard, loth to go after all, and as loth to remain. His hurt pride had received some slight balm, when he saw Anne run out in her little pink apron to her eyes, and apparently quite forgetful of the late scene, so ready in it said Anne, more patiently.

"I don't know about that!" retorted Josie; "it was only you he mentioned as having anything to be ashamed of—" But here even thoughtful Josie checked herself, mortified at having exposed such base selfishness.

"Children!" exclaimed Anne, turning her glorious eyes full upon her with a flash of noble wrath.

"Now, now, what have I said?" pouted Josie; "why should he be afraid to tell the secret?" as if she had it all in her power.

"My poor child, you don't realize that his name is our shame, or you wouldn't believe so readily in it," said Anne, more patiently.

"I don't know about that!" retorted Josie; "it was only you he mentioned as having anything to be ashamed of—" But here even thoughtful Josie checked herself, mortified at having exposed such base selfishness.

"Children!" called Mrs. Korcheval faintly.

They entered their parents' chamber.

Their father was pacing up and down the narrow limits of the room, his hands clenched, his eye fixed, and a thin white streak of foam upon his bloodshot lips. His petticed wife crept upon the floor, the chair, leaning in a corner following his erratic movements with apprehension. Ned stood half-hidden behind a tall oak pedestal, his small, sharp features fixed in an expression of ineffable attention, his black eyes fastened upon his father as if he would fain compel him to speak. Indeed it would be difficult to conceive a countenance of more craft and shrewdness than this juvenile's at the moment when his sisters entered the room.

"Come to me, girls!" moaned their mother, holding out her arms to them. "Oh, what is this that has come upon us?" she continued, though she had one on each side of her, with their clasped hands over her head. "What was it that the stranger said to your father that could have such a fearful effect on him? Somehow I can't remember—can you?"

Anne mutely caressed her, smoothing back her hair, which was still rich and jetty, though thickly sprinkled with gray; but Josie spoke up with considerable vim.

"He said wouldn't father give something to blot out the past, and that he'd seen alive some person that father made a wicked compact—"

"Weak and cowardly," corrected Ned, his eying.

"Compact with, twenty years ago," concluded Josie, with a smile as ever.

"Yes, you know what he said," faltered Mrs. Korcheval, growing paler. "What in heaven's name could he mean?"

"He meant the same thing father did," said Ned, coming out of his corner in his eagerness, "when he said that for twenty years he'd insulted his Maker and deceived the world."

"For shame!" interposed Anne, in low, stern accents; "heartless wretches that you are, would you squeeze your drop of gall into an already brimming cup of sorrow? Keep quiet, for shame's sake, if you can't for love's."

"Hush, hush, my children!" implored the gentle mother, who had given up all hope of saving her son's soul.

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"For shame!" interposed Anne, in low, stern accents; "heartless wretches that you are, would you squeeze your drop of gall into an already brimming cup of sorrow? Keep quiet, for shame's sake, if you can't for love's."

"Hush, hush, my children!" implored the gentle mother, who had given up all hope of saving her son's soul.

"Compact with, twenty years ago," concluded Ned, with a smile as ever.

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THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

NEW YORK Saturday Journal

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Sunshine Papers

A Question.

"**FILTHY old creatures!**" said I. The creatures referred to were men; the remark being made upon the occasion of a morning ride in a horse-car, and my ire aroused by the fact that out of ten passengers seated opposite me, had transformed themselves into industriously ruminating animals. They were leading themselves, sedulously, to the task of making that car-floor a place that would have disgraced the most slovenly poker in the United States.

Let me say, alike to people with minds unprejudiced in favor of that delicious weed, tobacco, and to those whose idol it is—an idol to which they cling, oftentimes more faithfully than love, or home, or hope of heaven—that my ride was not taking place in the early morning, when only the working class filled the cars, but at that hour when business gentlemen (I) were on their way down-town, ladies, richly attired for calls and shopping, who also smoked, and a small sprinkling of the clergy complicated this list of passengers. And, great respect as I have for the so-called divines, truth compels me to protest that no amount of piety suggests to some of them that filthiness and rudeness are scarcely consistent parts of a clergyman's character and acts. Laity and clergy were alike protested against in the indignant ejaculation which was the vocal outgrowth of offended olfactorys, disgusted vision, nauseated stomach, and insulted womanhood.

Eleven passengers occupied the side of the car opposite to the one upon which I sat. One was a woman, thin and evidently, gentlemanly, seven were well-dressed pieces of masculinity, all nearly or more than man-sized. These last were engrossed with their morning papers meantime rolling sweet morsels of tobacco in their mouths, poisoning the air with its odor and saturating the floor with horrid stains: from ruinous contact with which the ladies found it quite impossible to wholly guard their dresses, without adopting such method of defense as would have laid them open to the charge of awful immodesty from these same grave and critical cheaters.

Now, I have seen it asserted, in every book of etiquette I ever examined, that it was highly improper and impolite for a person to spit in company. [My readers must excuse me to spit in company.] Moreover, the impropriety of such acts is conceded and taught by persons who have never seen the inside of a book of etiquette. Yet these seven creatures, whom it would be an insult to a large portion of mankind to call gentlemen, sat there, with unblushing effrontery, defying an accepted rule of politeness and that great golden rule which is the integral part of all chivalry and etiquette. They polluted the air which a score of persons beside themselves were forced to breathe; they indulged in fre-

quent acts offensive to good taste; they rendered their own personal appearance often disgusting; they made filthy the surroundings of each of their traveling companions; besides doing actual damage to the property of several of these companions. What would they not have thought, and said, had some person chosen to stain and soil the seats upon which rested their handsome winter overcoats? Yet the insult would not have been one whit the less than they, deliberately, offered to every woman who, taking a seat within the car, was forced to bear away her skirts to some degree injured by their filthy defiance of all laws of propriety.

Careless, thoughtless men who uses tobacco in any form, to excess, to be a social pest, now, my scowling friends of the sternest sort just save your frowns and anathemas for some one who dreads them, and ask yourself, seriously, that question, and see what honesty will claim as an answer. There are many men, as well as women, to whom the sight of a man chewing that disgusting vegetable, defiling his own breath, teeth, lips, mustache, and beard, and all the places and property surrounding him, is shocking to the taste, repulsive to the smell, trying to the nerves, and wholly sickening. Is any creature a gentleman who will thus torture his fellow? And how can he be a good companion, a decent person, who remains himself, entirely, from such use of tobacco in the presence of every acquaintance or stranger with whose feelings on the subject he is not familiar? And where may be found a person addicted to the use of tobacco who is enough his own master to restrain himself in such a degree?

Of most smokers the question may be as significantly asked, can they be thorough gentlemen? Is it gentlemanly to render filthy a public walk, or hall, or conveyance, or a stranger's or acquaintance's oratory or house? Is it gentlemanly to do that which is injurious to the property and senses of others? Is it gentlemanly to smoke in any place where you lack positive evidence of it not being disagreeable to all those who will be affected thereby? Is it gentlemanly to come into the presence of women, or to solicit the caresses of mother, sister, friend, sweetheart, child, or wife, with lips and breath poisoned and impure?

And no man who uses tobacco can avoid trespassing, more or less often, upon the rights of society, and dear ones; for the poison is a tyrant, who owns no subjects but slaves!

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

How many a person goes, day after day, to the post-office—sometimes walking many a mile—in hopes to receive some money due, money which has been fairly and legitimately earned and money which is actually needed to meet debts due and pay the actual necessary daily expenses. Sometimes the sum of many depend upon the reception of a certain amount which may be small to the debtor yet large to the creditor. With a heart almost sick, and with a weary sigh, the disappointed ones turn from the window, only to go through the same feelings on the morrow.

But hope keeps the spirit up, and it is that hope which keeps one from suffering too much the weight of a heavy disappointment. "It surely must come to-morrow" are words often said, and these words, simple though they are, inspire one with courage. When we see so much misery in circulation, and changing hands, and have entire control over us, it is evident that a person should feel any great discomfiture at the non-reception of a few dollars. They may be a few, but it may mean food, warmth and clothing, perhaps very life itself. It may be all they have to depend upon; and were it not for hope how terrible at times would be the suffering be. Why, without hope, men often times would go mad for their necessities.

The city is in commotion; excitement is depicted upon every cheek; a great battle has been fought; newsboys are running here and there, shouting the dreadful tidings. With trembling eyes how many scan the pages of the paper! There have been loved fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, daughters, mothers, and now the dead and wounded are carefully buried or solemnly read. The name you feared to find is not in print, and, though you know there may be errors and names omitted, yet your heart is filled with hope that he may yet be alive and well. In your own hopeful happiness you may forget to think how sadly may the hearts of those whose loved one's names are there be stricken.

We read of the explosion of a steamer, the destruction of a railway train, or the falling of a factory. We read the sad news that the man behind the head-line "500 LIVES LOST" was saying "What a terrible disaster!" we give it no more thought. Yet, each of those five hundred lives was dear to some, and perhaps twice five hundred lives are made wretched at twice their loss. In some homes hope has not entirely deserted the household. They live in hopes that their friends may not be among that five hundred. It may seem somewhat selfish, this merely thinking of our own, but "we love our own the best"; it is no more than natural, and certainly like human nature. Would the inventor toil so long over his work, after having made so many losses, if he did not hope of arriving at perfection at last? How cheerfully it insinuates itself, it makes the hours seem shorter and his work less hard. Hope is the heart of the struggling author and actor; it encourages one to persevere; it is a beacon light to guide one safely. Suppose this hope has buoyed one up through life, and at its end that life has not proved a profitable one, has it not been made better for that hope? Hope never ruined any one, to my knowledge, but despondency has sent many a poor soul to their grave. "It is better to rub than rust"—it is better to hope than to despair.

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DREAMLAND.

BY MRS. ADDIE D. ROLLSTON.

"Twas the breath of the flowers
That filled the hours
In beauty and silence were springing,
And the waves of the river
That with sunlight-a-quiver
In murmuring whispers were singing—

That called thoughts of gladness
To moments of sadness
And brightened the beautiful day,
With memories old
Of days sweet and golden
That vanished in mist-wreaths away!

Fond hopes I had cherished,
Fair dreams that had perished
Came back with the sunbeams' glow,
To fill the hours
That grew in youth's hours
A harvest of passionate woe!

Oh! dreamland of splendor!
Where thoughts sweet and tender
Can come at the heart's faintest call!
There is joy for the meekest
And strength for the weakest
Who enter thy glittering hall!

Then faces will greet us,
And footsteps will meet us
That long ago vanished away!
And the heart will grow tender
Neath the mystical splendor
And glow of the beautiful day!

And vows were spoken
To be rudely broken
With the brightness of eyes of old,
And spirits that languish
With sorrow and anguish
The pinions of peace will enfold!

Stories of Chivalry.

THE LETTRES DE CACHET.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

"I THOUGHT you were going to make a suggestion, Duke."

"For once your thoughts were right, Marmon."

Lettres de cachet are in the market."

"But not one would be given to Marmon de Briese. The queen does not like the name I bear, and the lieutenant of police dare not sell me one."

"The queen and yourself at the outs? Pray explain, for this is news to me. It will excite Parisian society."

"'Tis nothing worth wasting time about. I wouldn't firt with her majesty, and so she has forbidden me the palace. All Paris is wondering why Marmon de Briese was not present at the reception of Don Juan, of Spain. I don't care that for the queen!" and the handsome young speaker snapped his white fingers derisively. "I owe her no gratitude. Our people's morals might mend if she were back in France."

"Not so loud, please. There are people in the next room, and your voice is known everywhere. But, to business. If a *lettre de cachet* will serve you, one you shall have."

The young nobleman's eye flashed joyfully.

"It alone can make me happy. I do not think that Adele—my adorable angel of the Rue Montmartre—thinks any too well of him. She has never shown any aversion for me, and I have been on my knees before the peerless creature within the fortnight. Her father, the count, is bound to this Haliase, and Adele has consented to become his bride. That is the way I look at it. A *lettre de cachet*, my dear Duke, and I am the happiest man in France. Once wedded, I will take my bride beyond the power of that Polish woman who calls herself Queen of France."

"When do you wish it?"

"This night, Duke. To-morrow is the wed-ding-day. He shall be arrested before daylight."

"At eleven to-night, Marmon. You shall have the instrument of victory placed in your hands at that hour."

The couple separated over a bottle of wine which the waiter brought into the gorgeous *salon* on a silver waiter. They passed in high spirits, and the youngest waded away, flushed with liquor and anticipated triumph.

Marmon de Briese was a young nobleman well known in Paris. He was gay, gallant, a good singer, and an expert swordsman. But, he was crazy in an *affaire du cœur* he would stoop to anything in order to gain desired ends. The queen alone had failed to ensnare the heart of the wild young Frenchman. He feared the jealous heart of Louis the Fifteenth, and his cunning had caused his ostracism from court. Maria was taking her revenge.

At once he was cut off from royal favors. He was fearful lest a *lettre de cachet* might be thrust into his face, and consign him to the relentless keeper of the bastile.

Marmon de Briese was actually in love, as we have heard him tell his friend, the Duke of Vélay. But, he feared that he possessed a rival who was about to lead the beautiful Adele to the altar. He saw no success save in the grant of a *lettre de cachet* with which he could lock the rascal up, and secure the girl for himself.

But the queen would grant him none, and he knew that he dared not apply in person to the lieutenant of police. Although the infamous *lettres de cachet* were for sale in Paris, Marmon de Briese, wealthy as he was, had not money enough to buy one.

Eleven o'clock found the young nobleman in the *salon* waiting for his friend, the Duke of Vélay. He was at last a little late, but none the less welcome, for he placed the coveted document in De Briese's path.

"This opens the bastile's iron doors to Jean Haliase, and secures to me the whitest hand in Paris."

The cunning lover was triumphant, and as the first streaks of dawn were glancing over Paris Jean Haliase was placed under arrest and thrust from De Briese's path.

So much for one *lettre de cachet*.

The arrest did not cause much excitement, for such affairs were too common to excite comment, and the unfortunate lover found himself securely imprisoned in the bastile. He knew that some enemy was at work, and gnashed his teeth when he thought of the name of Marmon de Briese.

"This is your work, cunning villain. I wish I could cross swords with you."

He sent his case to the king, but Louis was buried too deeply in debauchery to think of a prisoner in the bastile. He tore the letter into fragments and sent the petitionor word that "stone walls were a good cure for hot heads."

The king never required into the cause of an arrest, and he was not going to depart from his established custom for the sake of such an obscure man as Jean Haliase.

"How progresses your suit with the charming Adele, Marmon?" the Duke of Vélay inquired of his young friend a month after the arrest and imprisonment of the rival.

"Swimmingly, my dear Duke," was the reply, and the dark eyes of De Briese flashed with triumph. "The caged bird frets and petitions the king, and the king reads the petitions to his companions in debauchery. The young lad does not know what torment his songs make. He is making an admirable court fool, while Adele is smiling on Marmon de Briese, who has slipped a ring over her finger."

"Indeed! so soon, my boy!"

"Courtsiers should not be years, my dear Duke. It is well that the queen knows nothing of this affair of mine. I understand that she has inquired after me within the past fortnight, and not in very good humor either."

"A quick courtship then, Marmon. *Lettres de cachet* are still fashionable."

The young nobleman grew slightly pale, and drew nearer to the Duke.

"It takes place to-morrow evening at nine," he whispered. "The priest, a witness, her father—that is all. At ten a carriage. Madrid."

The master of Vélay understood the crisp sentence.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "You are a match for the Polish woman."

"And for Monsieur Haliase!" said De Briese, with a meaning smile. "I defy the queen to discover me. Nobody suspects anything. The *lettres de cachet*, my noble Duke, is making me happy."

The young nobleman and his friend were drinking to the success of their tricks when a young woman appeared at the Tuilleries, and requested an audience with the queen.

Maria Leczenski was unengaged at the moment, and the person was admitted into her presence. It was near midnight and the queen's eyes were heavy; but they flashed at the wonderful beauty of her visitor.

"Well!" said the queen, regarding the girl with admiration.

"I pray that your majesty grant me a *lettre de cachet*," was the reply which startled the queen.

"They belong to the state," was her cautious rejoinder. "In the hands of indiscreet persons they are productive of harm. We cannot grant you one."

The countenance of the queen's visitor fell.

"What do you want with a *lettre de cachet*?" asked Maria Leczenski, coming forward.

"Revenge!" the girl cried. "I come here boldly and face the queen who has sold the infamous documents. I declare that they have not been refused by royalty itself to men who would deluge the scaffold with innocent blood."

Maria Leczenski, the queen, had broken the boy's heart in France by her sale of *lettres de cachet*. She has torn Adèle's white, father from children, and separated lovers."

"Bother!" cried the queen, touching a bell.

"You are in the royal palace. I am the queen!"

"But not more a woman than myself!" was the girl's reply, as she drew a tiny dagger from her bosom.

"Do not start, Maria Leczenski!" she said. "This dagger shall not be stained with royal blood. Without the document which I seek to-night I would be balked in my revenge. Give it to me or to my heart here—in the royal palace—I will drive this dagger."

The queen stood like one petrified with horror in the center of the gorgeous chamber. She saw the dagger lifted on high and caught determination in her visitor's eyes.

"Stay!" she cried, putting forth her jeweled hands. "For whom is intended the *lettre de cachet*?"

The girl hesitated.

"My queen need not know," she said at length.

"I will fit it out. Maria Leczenski will never wish to recall it."

"You shall have it!" said the queen, going to a table from which she took one of the infamous documents. "I admire your daring. This time is coming when these infamous *lettres de cachet* will no longer curse this country. Remember that whoever you send to prison shall not be released until you command it. What is your name, fair lady?"

The girl put up the dagger and timidly approached the queen.

"Adele Dumarte."

A flash of intelligence lit up the sovereign's face.

"Ahi yes!" she exclaimed. "Your lover is imprisoned in the bastile. Do you not seek his release?"

"My wedding takes place to-morrow evening at nine—at least the bridegroom is to greet me then."

"Not unless the prison gives up its inmate."

"Ay," smiled the girl. "One lover in prison, another at large!"

The musical laugh of the Polish woman greeted the girl's witty reply, and a minute later the lithe figure was entering a carriage just beyond the palace gate.

The postilion whipped up the horses and over the narrow streets the cumbersome vehicle flew. Adele Dumarte, laughing with joy, pressed the lithe figure was entering a carriage just beyond the palace gate.

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and I'll make my toes twinkle after you. And just you mind this one thing. Little boys and little dogs oughtn't never to speak afore they're spoke to."

Pete had spent some time in this confab with the dog, but he was not without his object in this.

He knew well that it would be perilous for him to meet Colonel Green in the forest. The desperate man would think little of sacrificing his life.

By holding back, and letting him reach the open country, Pete calculated to be able to call some farmer or villager to his aid, and by giving the hue and cry, to run down the fugitive before he could gain much the start.

The dog had been trained to scent game in the woods, but this was the first time he had been on the track of any human being, except his master.

He followed the scent, however, with seeming ease, leading Pete at a rapid walk through the leafy recesses of the thick forest.

"Go to 'd dorg," cried Pete, with enthusiasm. "You're the man for my money. Tain't a possum you're after now, Nick, but it's a cat-amount on two legs. Don't be you forgettin' your reputation, dorg. Don't let the old fox double on you."

Nicodemus seemed excited by his master's voice, and traced the scent more rapidly than before.

"It's just like traillin' Injuns through 'he woods!" said Pete, laughing. "If it ain't, I'll sell out. Never mind the bird, Nick. Tain't meadow-larks we're after now, but it's an old hawk. If you stop for coon or rabbit now I'll dispossess you. I will! Let out, little dorg, and show your tracks. There are open fields, and we kin use our eyes as well as our noses."

The woodland had ended, and an open country spread out before them. It was cultivated to some extent, but lay largely in grass, herds of sheep and cattle browsing here and there.

The course of the creek was marked by a line of trees that ran to the left of his position. Numerous farmhouses were visible from where he stood, and about a mile distant he could see the white walls and brown roofs of a village.

The country was level, but its many small groves and isolated trees presented very extended view. At some distance before him ran a narrow lane, stretching southwesterly toward the village.

"Hello, Nick!" cried Pete; "there's a little feller crawling along that road, that might be a six-footer if he was only here. He's creepin', too, 'bout as fast as two legs kin let out. I'll bet a b'il tater it's the kurnel, and he's makin' for Woodville like greased lightnin' along a telegraph wire. Make your old legs twinkle, Nick. He's got the butt-end of a mile the start on us, and the railroad cuts through that town!"

The boy and the dog emulated each other in the speed with which they ran across the fields. Pete went over the fences at a flying leap while Nicodemus shot under them. Ditches were no obstacle to them, and hedges were passed without a pause.

They were they had advanced a quarter of a mile, a shrill sound struck Pete's ear with ominous meaning.

"I'll be fiddled to death if there ain't a train comin'!" he ejaculated, "and the cute skunk will catch it."

A brook, eight feet from bank to bank, cut the field before him.

Pete, doubled up like a ball, went over it at full run. Nicodemus was at his heels as he had taken ten steps beyond.

"Lay out, Nick! Lay out!" yelled Pete, with whom breath he had left. "We're runnin' a race with the lightning! If you don't beat it I'll sell you, and pay off little animalie!"

Their progress was very rapid, but the long line of smoke to the left was approaching with alarming speed.

In a minute more the thunder of the wheels on the bridge that crossed the creek was heard, and the iron front of the locomotive broke into view through the line of trees that bordered the stream.

The pursuers had now struck the road and were able to advance even more rapidly. But there was yet nearly half a mile before them, and the roaring and rattling train was flying towards them.

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"I am afraid," said Seth, "that they have been injured poor Abe, for they quarreled with him, and he left them."

"It Hawk-Eyes is Ivan Le Clerc, as you say, he will not hesitate to do anything," replied Abe Thorne.

"Why are you afraid they have killed Abe?"

The boy strained his muscles to their uttermost and ran faster than he had ever run before.

He was within two minutes' run of the depot when the iron horse slowly emerged from behind the building and passed with a stately motion before his eyes, gathering speed with every revolution of the wheels.

Pete ran on, hoping to be able to gain the hindmost car. But car after car passed before his eyes; the rear car emerged and rolled rapidly on, until just beyond the reach of Pete's outstretched hand.

The boy stumbled and fell across the track, utterly exhausted by his excessive exertion. Nicodemus saluted beside him, violently panting.

"Well, that's a narrow squeeze!" said a man on the platform. "The boy ought to have caught the train, the way he ran for it. Never mind, lad, there will be another in a couple of hours."

Pete rose to his feet gesticulating violently. He was too short of breath to speak, and this was the only way he could give vent to his excited feelings. A couple of hours! It might as well have been a couple of years.

The men on the platform laughed at his movements. This added anger to his excitement, and it was some five minutes before he could gather breath and compose to speak.

The train was already beyond sight and hearing in the distance.

"Don't I tell you?" he screamed out, at length. "Don't I tell you he's aboard that train? And all you standin' here like stones."

He seemed to imagine that he had been expressing his feelings in words.

"Who is aboard the train?" asked the man who had spoken.

"Why, he is, the blasted, thunderin' rascal! Aint you goin' to do somethin'? After I've run a mile?"

"Have you lost your senses, boy?" said another man. "Who are you talking about?"

"Why, the kurnel! Kurnel Green, ain't I tellin' you? If I'd catched that train wouldn't I have settled him!"

"Colonel Green? I know him. What do you want with Colonel Green?"

"Aint he aboard that train?"

"I knowed it! I knowed it! He's got to be cotched. Aint there a telegraph here? We've got to send thunder and lightnin' after him."

"Blame your neck wits!" cried the man, catching Pete by the shoulder and shaking him roughly. "What ails ya, anyhow? What's the matter with Colonel Green?"

A low, savage bark at his heels from Nicodemus forced him to relinquish his hold of the boy's shoulder.

The shake had done Pete good, however. His scattered senses returned to him, and he saw how wildly he had been acting in his excitement.

"Well, I'm blamed if this ain't gay!" he said.

"Lost my brains for a minute, but Picayune Pete's hisself again. If you're in Toledo an hour from now you'll know what the kurnel's doing."

"We'll know now if you are able to tell us," said the man.

"You all know bout Minnie Ellis bein' stole, and how there's five thousand on the head of the thief!"

"Yes! yes!" cried a half-dozen voices, in sudden excitement.

"There goes, in that train; slipped through your fingers like a greased eel. Blast him, if I'd only cotched him!"

"Colonel Green?" was eagerly asked.

"That's your hoss, for a pile of pumpkins. I tell you the gal's found, and I'm the coon that done it. Where's the telegrapher? Send word to grab him at the next station."

"There's no telegrapher here," said one of the station hands. "Can't send a message short of Toledo."

"How soon will a train be along up the road?" asked the first speaker.

"In fifteen minutes."

"Then me and the dorg are two deadheads to Toledo," said Pete.

The time of waiting for the train was spent by Pete in detailing his adventures to a small circle of eager listeners.

He walked up to the station on time, and the dog, with nearly all present, got on board, and were borne swiftly off toward the city.

At almost the same minute the sloop, Mary Jane, sailed gracefully up to her wharf in the city, decorated with a dozen flags, which the captain had somewhere hunted up.

The throng along the wharves looked with surprise on this unwonted display. In ten minutes more the surprise was exchanged to an excitement that ran like wildfire through the city. (To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

MY SYMPTOMS.

BY CHAS. MORRIS.

When my Maria leaves in sight
There comes at once the queerest feeling,
A sort of second-hand delight
Across my tootsie fingers stealing;

My hands are all up and down,
A pit-a-pat sort of motion;
I feel just like a duck done brown,
And what it is I've not a notion.

You've felt it all, I should suppose;
Across your eyes a dimness coming,
A cold sweat running down your nose,
Your ears are all of summim';

You tongue is all out of speech,
And drops into a feeble stutter;
Ah! teach me, some good fellow, teach
What puts my heart in such a flutter!

Her eyes are black as any soles,
And bright—the stars themselves not brighter!

Her lips are found the crimson rose,
Her cheeks than water-lilles whiter.

Her voice is full of tender tones,
So musical, divine, elastic;
Sure something's got into my bones
That makes me so enthusiastic.

Will some one tell me what is loose
Inside of my organization?
I'm so inclined to play the goose
To give me a friend to take.

I know it's some disease!
I freeze, I quake, I burn with fire;
Good doctor, give me, if you please,
Something to cure me of—Maria.

SURE-SHOT SETH,

The Boy Rifleman:

OR,

THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD DAN BACKBACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

WAS IT THE SHOT OF AN ASSASSIN?

A RIFLE-SHOT rang suddenly through the forest, starting Seth and Nicodemus with sudden fear. The report was followed by a groan, and that Abe Thorne's friends had assassinated him. Seth had not a single doubt; for the look the young villain, Hawk-Eyes, gave him when he turned to leave, meant mischief.

"I am afraid," said Seth, "that they have been injured poor Abe, for they quarreled with him, and he left them."

"It Hawk-Eyes is Ivan Le Clerc, as you say, he will not hesitate to do anything," replied Abe Thorne.

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"Well, that's a narrow squeeze!" said a man on the platform. "The boy ought to have caught the train, the way he ran for it. Never mind, lad, there will be another in a couple of hours."

Pete rose to his feet gesticulating violently. He was too short of breath to speak, and this was the only way he could give vent to his excited feelings. A couple of hours! It might as well have been a couple of years.

The men on the platform laughed at his movements. This added anger to his excitement, and it was some five minutes before he could gather breath and compose to speak.

"Ah! my friends, the Boy Brigade, are near," said Seth.

A fierce, savage yell rung through the forest, then the sharp, ringing report of a rifle followed by the sound of other shots fired in rapid succession.

The boy conspirators started to their feet, and like many frightened deer, bounded away into the woods, while Hawk-Eyes turned and crept through the shadows in the direction whence the sounds of conflict came.

"Maggie," said Seth, "my friends are near and engaged with the savages. You will be safe here for a while, and I will go to their assistance; but return to you, soon. If we succeed in defeating the foe, our escape will be certain."

"Go, Seth, to our friends' assistance. I will await your return," said the brave little maiden.

Seth crept away through the woods, and soon came in sight of the combatants. He placed a whistle in his mouth and blew a sharp blast upon it. Instantly, from different quarters, arose a dozen answering cries, plain and distinct.

"Ah! my friends, the Boy Brigade, are near," said Seth.

A savage yell answered the latter.

A deep hollow divided the foes who were engaged in the timber that crowned the summits of the bluffs. But not a friend or foe could be seen.

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"Colonel Green? I know him. What do you want with Colonel Green?"

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"Colonel Green?" was eagerly asked.

"That's your hoss, for a pile of pumpkins. I tell you the gal's found, and I'm the coon that done it. Where's the telegrapher? Send word to grab him at the next station."

capped his rifle, he began peering cautiously around the tree for a red-skin; but before he had the chance of a second shot, a fierce yell rose in the rear, starting both with a shudder of terror.

"Flanked, by the New Jerusalem!" exclaimed old Jim, turning and glancing toward the horde swarming through the woods upon them.

Seth took to his heels, fleeing in the direction of his friends.

The savages on the opposite bluff charged from the rear.

Joyful Jim started down the tree, but he saw at a glance that he could not escape the foe, and so changed his notion and climbed higher among the branches in hopes the savages would not discover him.

Sure Shot Seth soon came to where his friend, the Beaver, was, and together the two ran toward the valley.

"I'm to fly!" burst in a deep, sonorous peal from his lips, the sound starting a shudder in the hearers, as the echoes repeated the fiend-like guffaw over and over in a hundred places throughout the cavern.

"How! how! how!" burst in a deep, sonorous peal from his lips, the sound starting a shudder in the hearers, as the echoes repeated the fiend-like guffaw

the still placid waters of the bay. Upon the bosom of the latter rested a strange-looking craft, resembling the long, narrow roof of a house with gables. A door opened in the side of this roof-like structure, and in front of it sat two persons, an old man and a young girl.

The former sat with his face buried in his hands, apparently absorbed in deep reverie; while the maiden, with snowy fingers flashing over the strings of a Spanish harp, called forth those wild, weird strains of celestial music.

CHAPTER XX.

PALACE OF OLD NEPTUNE.

ENCHANTED by the music and startled by the scene, Maggie Harris stood silent and motionless, listening to the one and studying the other. The player was a young and beautiful girl, possibly not over eighteen years of age. Her hair, loveliness, and air of high-born accomplishments contrasted strangely with the surrounding scene. Her eyes were of a soft brown, large and lustrous, and full of tenderness and love. She was robed in a gown of misty blue with a white collar around the snowy neck. Her golden hair hung like silken floss down her back. A tiny, golden clasp at the throat, and a modest little rose in the hair were the only ornaments the fair creature wore. She sat near the old man, her very attitude, the poise of the head, and the manner in which she held her harp, all were posseions of exquisite grace and ease.

The man was upward of sixty years of age, and in type and dress the personification of old Neptune. His face, his beard, his hair, and even his trident spear, bore a striking resemblance to those of the God of the Sea. His brow wore the contracted furrows of care and deep thought. By his side lay some mechanical contrivance, consisting of wheels, rods and shafts of copper; and by these sat a kit of tools, such as would only be used by a master mechanical hand.

The craft upon which these two mysterious people were seated was as odd as it was ingenious. It was about twenty feet long by ten in width, and sloped gradually from the water to a point in the rear of the stern-post, though it was plainly evident that some portion of its square was submerged. The whole was plated with galvanized sheet-iron which gave it a white, clouded color. On the top were four small tubes resembling chimneys, though it was not possible that all were used as such. Maggie regarded the strange sight for some time with speechless emotion. She had often heard of Lake Luster and the foreboding solitude that surrounded it; but never had she heard of these people, who had, from all appearances, dwelt there for some time. She scarcely knew whether to consider them friends or foes. There was something in the stern looks of the old man and the desolate repose that surrounded his habitation, that made her doubtful of his character. But, the fair and lovely creature at his side—innocence, womanly love and kindness were written upon every feature of her face; and in the strains that floated out from the harp came the accompaniment of a sweet and holy spirit.

While the fugitive maiden stood undecided as to the course she should pursue, the old man started up, seized his trident and thrust it into the water. A smile overspread his face—a smile that drove away all those hard lines, and relieved the fears of Maggie Harris. As the old man drew back his spear, our heroine saw a large fish impaled upon it, struggling in the grip of the terrible barbs.

Releasing the fish, and securing it from escape, the old man again relaxed into silence, while the maiden continued at the harp. Five minutes, perhaps, had passed, when he again threw his spear and drew in a second fish. While he was releasing it, the maiden ceased playing, and, walking to the old man, said:

"Oh, what a nice fish, father! The two will be ample for our want for a day or two. The poor thing, how it struggles. It seems a pity to kill them, after having enticed them here by the enchantment of music."

"God has placed the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea at our command; and we have only to take them when we need demand them. A slice of venison, or a roasted fowl, would be a welcome change at our table; but these are perilous times, and the report of a rifle might guide enemies to our retreat."

"Enemies? what enemies have we, father?" questioned the maiden.

"There's no telling; the savages will doubtless regard all whites who do not join their ranks as enemies; and, if so, we will be in danger, for I will never bear arms against my countrymen."

"Why not observe a strict neutrality, father?"

"This would be impossible with the red-skins. They have no knowledge, in their savage ignorance, of civilized warfare, and we could not convince them that, as neutrals, we had any rights they were bound to respect."

"Why not quit Lake Luster till peace is restored, father?"

"I could not think of it, Vishnia; especially, while upon the eve of success in my invention that must give me fame and wealth through all ages to come."

"But, father, if there is a war between the North and South, the sale of your self-propelling, self-acting torpedoes may give you both fame and wealth. Now would be a good time to introduce your invention."

"Not very, daughter. The war between the North and South will not be a naval war. It will be principally on land," the old man replied.

"At any rate, why waste more of your life over a project that you may never achieve, and which will ruined the life and mind of many a wise genius?"

Maggie heard all this conversation, and was not a little surprised. She saw that the old man had secluded himself there to work out in secret the complication of some great invention. She had heard and read of such self-abnegation before, on the part of wise men, for the furtherance of science. But, such great sacrifice had been uncalled for, and was usually attended with an overwrought imagination. In the subdued light of the old man's eyes, his knitted brows, and snowy temples, she could see the presence of a partially-clouded mind. His conversation revealed this, and Maggie had resolved not to intrude upon the privacy of his beloved schemes, and was about to turn away when she heard a rustle in the shrubbery to her right. Turning her eyes, she beheld a clump of bushes carefully parted, and a painted savage face appear in the opening.

A cry rose to her lips, and like a deer she darted from her concealment and ran toward the water. She had gone but a few paces, however, when the savage overtook her. He grasped her by the arm and affected her flight; then he lifted her in his strong, brawny arms and turned to flee. But, before he had taken a dozen steps something struck him in the back with a dull, insidious quiver running through his whole form, he sank heavily to the earth, falling across the unconscious form of Maggie.

A massive footstep approached from the lake, and the tall form of the mysterious old man of Lake Luster stood by the side of the dead warrior and the helpless maiden. Stooping, he seized the savage's form and hurled him aside, then from the body he withdrew his barbed spear, lifted Maggie in his strong arms and carried her aboard his boat. Scarcely had he done so when a fierce, savage yell burst upon the air, and a score of savages roused from the woods to avenge their fallen comrade; but, before they could reach the water's edge, the boat was put in motion.

The savages fired at the craft, but their bullets glanced from the metal covering of the structure like hail from a stone wall; and, in a few moments more, it was even beyond rifle-range, out upon the bosom of Lake Luster.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 353.)

THE FROZEN RAIN.

BY M. A. WARNER.

What magic scene is this that greets my raptured vision,

Have the angels left their homes and come to us for a day?

They brought these robes of beauty, from their bright and fair Elysian,

To make glad the hearts of mortals, and to cheer them on the way!

See the trees, all decked in jewels, like unnumbered tapers lighted,

Gleam like rubies, opals, diamonds, in the clear and frosty air!

Every shrub is clothed in beauty, nor have meanest weeds been slighted,

But one and all alike shine forth, in radiance rich and rare.

Would that I could read the lesson shadowed forth in all this whiteness—

Read a lesson, that, if true, would fill all hearts with undutiful bliss,

That we each and every one at last should share a home of brightness,

And forget all sins and sorrow that had troubled us in this.

Oh, our Father! may I trust that Thy care for erring mortals,

In this our winter sent a lesson, thus for human hearts to think;

Shall we each and every one at last, pass through the golden portals,

And form one glorious chain, without a missing link?

Adrift on the Prairie:

OR,
THE ADVENTURES OF FOUR YOUNG NIMRODS.

BY OLL COOMES.

X.—A GRAND SPECTACLE—OUR RETURN TO SWAN LAKE.

One can but faintly imagine our feelings when started from a sweet, pleasant slumber by Uncle Lige's excited words informing us that we were doomed to a fearful death. We quickly arose and dressing ourselves hurried outside, where a sight that paralyzed us with horror met our gaze. The prairie was on fire! Around us on all sides was a wall of red, glaring flames. The slough to our right and the slough to our left, and the plain before and behind us were one seething mass of roaring, hissing fire, the closest wall being scarcely over a mile from us.

We knew the minute we saw the situation that Uncle Lige had been sleeping on his post, else he would have discovered the fire ere we awoke. He was afraid of prairie fire, and it was to guard against this danger that made him so anxious to keep watch; and yet he had let the seductive goddess Sleep win him from his vigil while his worst fears were realized. This he frankly admitted without fear.

But how come the plain and swamps on fire? we questioned, feeling not a little mystified that the fire should be all around us, instead of being upon one side.

"It's been them infernal Ingines, I expect; and they've fixed it all around in hopes of gittin' the game inside already roasted. It's one of their ornery tricks to kill game by fire—burn it to death. They're too lazy to hunt and shoot it. But, boys, we must try to save our lives."

"What can we do?" was the question that passed from lip to lip. There was such a fascinating horror in the awful scene that we could not turn our eyes from it. A continuous roar that seemed to tremble through the night like the jarring sound of distant thunder smote our ears. The flames, feeding upon the tall dry reeds in the swamps, shot heavenward like monstrous serpent tongues, licking and lapping at the clouds. The blue sky and its starry hosts were blotted from view by the dense, black smoke. A dome of awful darkness hung over us—all of living flame surrounded us, lighting up the scene with a whitish garish light that rendered our faces ghastly. Uncle Lige's black mustachioed and imperial stuck out in his profile against a full, round face of snowy whiteness. Bob's brown beard and bronzed face looked fiery and wild; while George's black eyes looked from a visage that wore a deathlike pallor. It was the first prairie-fire the latter had ever seen; and yet he betrayed no more wonder and fear than the rest of us. There was a horrible fascination about it that none could resist, and we stood mute and silent as graven images transfixed by momentary fear. Our horses pricked up their ears and snorted uneasily. Uncle Lige's cattle bellowed with affright as they glared, with glassy eyes and white, ghostly horns, around them. And Ben, cowering under the wagon, lent an additional terror to the scene by a mournful, quavering howl.

"Boys! Boys!" called Uncle Lige, "come, come, we must get to work!"

His words broke the spell that bound us, and we at once realized, that if we would save ourselves, we must be doing something; for the flames, roaring and crackling as if belched from the mouth of the Inferno, were fast closing in around us.

We caught the wild howl of wolves inside the circle of fire. With frightened scream birds started up from their grassy roosts, only to become bewildered and suffocated and fall back into the flames. To and fro across the arena of fire we could see a number of graceful animal forms gliding with the speed of the wind. They were dear, but we had no desire to molest them now. Our personal safety was the first consideration.

As a sailor knows how to contend with the dangers of the sea, so does a plainsman the dangers of the prairie. Perils that seem unavoidable to those unaccustomed to the ocean or plain are met and easily overcome by these two reckless and fearless characters.

With his usual composure, Uncle Lige turned to us and said:

"Boys, if you don't want to roast alive, help me start a 'back-fire.'"

We waited for no further orders. We followed his example, and pulling a double-headed of dry grass, touched a lighted match to it, and then assisted in firing the grass in a circle around the wagon, and about ten rods from it. Of course, a double row of fire was the result, one moving toward the wagon, the other outward, leaving a broad space between. However, before the inner circle had got under headway, we took bunches of grass, dipped them in a pail of water brought in before night, and then whipped out the fire, and our danger was over. Meanwhile, the outer circle that we had started, was rapidly gathering force and sweeping on to meet the mighty wall of flame rolling in toward us.

When assured that all dangers were passed, our fears assumed an expression of admiration, and we stood, watching the seething, roaring tide until the plain had been swept clean of its brown, fleecy coat. Owing to the inner circle of fire, we were unable to see what became of the animals that the first circle had surrounded. We were satisfied, however, that they perished in the flames.

A half a minute after the two fires met they went out, and an impenetrable gloom fell around us. Nothing but a black, ruined waste hung up on the trail of the fiery element. The smoke still obscured the sky. The nauseate, pungent odor of the burned grass and the flying ashes filled the air.

We lit our lantern and sat down within its light. We could not help talking of the awful fire. Uncle Lige remained quiet, a strange smile playing upon his face. We all noted his indifference and spoke of it aside; and as it continued, a vague mistrust rose in our minds. This was strengthened after taking into consideration the facts of his anxiety to stand guard, the near approach of the fire before we were aroused, and his unusual sang froid in the face of what he had first termed imminent danger; and we were finally led to suspect him of having fired the plain himself for the sake of a little sensation.

We slept but little more that night, and were extremely glad when the day dawned upon us; although its light revealed a black, desolate

waste of prairie that stripped the landscape of its romantic beauty. The Hell and Purgatory were shorn of their wilderness of reeds. Their waters were discolored with black ashes, and studded with the black, burned stumps of the reeds.

Deer hunting was at an end here now, and so, harnessing up, we began retracing our footsteps toward Swan Lake. When some twenty miles from it, we crossed the trail of the fire, and once more entered the brown, grassy plain. Here we felt more at ease, and that spirit of desolation that pervaded our breasts, while upon the burned district, was entirely banished.

We had no hopes, however, of sighting game short of the lake, and did nothing on that subject, when we were suddenly brought to a halt by command of Uncle Lige, who, in a quick, excited tone, directed our attention to the crest of a bold eminence on the plain a mile or two west of us.

THE morning of the 7th of July was one of the most beautiful I have ever seen at sea. The sun arose bright and clear, and the fresh, cool, pure air swept mildly across the decks and played idly with the ropes and sails.

Upon going to my cabin I perceived Captain D. examining the glass with much earnestness, and a look of anxiety upon his swarthy, sun-burnt face.

"How does the barometer stand, captain?"

"Twenty-eight," he replied, hurriedly.

"Twenty-eight! Why, the mercury stood at thirty this morning."

"We shall have lightning and wind before very long," said Captain D., taking a seat.

By three o'clock we were becalmed; not a capful of wind was stirring, and a sense of suffocation troubled me.

The ocean was as smooth as a piece of ice; no ripple or wave disturbed its serenity.

And so it continued until five o'clock.

The vessel had no steerage-way upon her.

By half past five the skies were overcast to the north and eastward by heavy banks of dark clouds, denser and more gloomy on account of the previous brightness and the present unearthly silence.

Nothing could be heard but the crackling of blocks or flapping of sails.

A strange, weird gloom settled upon the water, growing blacker and denser each moment. And yet there was no wind, no motion to the water or vessel.

The gloom and silence were ominous; it affected all hands and produced a very uncomfortable feeling in officers and men.

Sail was shortened and preparation made for a "nasty night."

Enough sail was, however, left to keep her steady and head to wind when it came.

I was determined to remain on deck and witness the sublimity of a storm at sea.

The rain poured down in torrents, and I heard the noise of the waves breaking on the deck.

The vessel was now heading south.

With the rain came wind, upon our port-quarter.

At length came a vivid flash from the inky-black clouds and illuminated the sea for miles around.

A broad blaze lighted up the skies.

It was grand, awful grand—sublime!

Then came a crash—a terrible crash.

Although expecting it, I was awed.

For half an hour the lightning and thunder gleamed and pealed across the ocean, accompanied by a heavy rain.

Suddenly the lightning ceased playing; the darkness was intense.

"Groping my way forward I found myself upon the top-gallant forecastle standing alongside the chief mate, who was ordering the man to keep a 'bright lookout ahead.'

While they were speaking I thought I heard a strange, rushing noise ahead.

"Hark, do you not hear that?" I asked.

The sound was more distinct now than ever; the mate heard it and stopped me.

"Good God! there's a vessel right ahead!"

He turned rapidly round, and placing his hand to his mouth thundered out: "Stand by your braces, men! Bear a hand! Let each brace be manned! Mind your helm!" from twenty threats.

We could not see a fathom ahead of our bow-sprit. The noise gained strength. I heard the mate hurrying forward to find out what was the trouble, but the mate angrily ordered them to their stations.

It was a terrible moment for us. The sound grew louder, but no ship appeared.

Suddenly a vivid flash shot across our bows and revealed the spars and hull of a large, heavy ship.

A LOVER'S POEM.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

I love thee for thy sterling worth,
(Six thousand pounds doth she inherit.)
'Tis the best groundless love on earth,
(Three-quarter section farm, or near it.)
Oh, for the day you'll call me yours!
(She's a woman, and I'm very sure.)
My hopes would fill the universe,
(I would be blest if they were fewer.)

I know of no one half so fair,
(She doesn't always treat me fairly.)
Your kindness is so rich and rare,
(But she dispenses it rarely.)
Your smile is very dear and sweet,
(She's a woman, and I'm very sure.)
My confidence is in you,
(If Jones is there to-night there goes it.)

For what thing else can I strive?
(My landlord urges me to labor.)
On your affection do I live,
(And sometimes dim upon my neighbor.)
And truly I suppose I do,
(An aristocrat I never need, miss.)

I love you much and well you know t,
(About three times so much indeed, miss.)

How proud you'd wear the name of wife?
(Authority it gives, in cases.)

Your feet would follow mine through life,
(When theaters allure their poses.)

Fame for you has many stores,
(A woman's virtue, I pause no mention.)

The lighter thoughts of yours are o'er,
(It's golden ore claims her attention.)

The stamp of beauty is thine own.
(A thousand dollar bill she carries.)

The man you love is king on throne,
(But how about the man she marries?)

I tell you, I care not for the carriage,
(We're I think her to be in carriage.)

Although I feel that I am thine,
(I fear 'twill be so after marriage.)

Great Captains.

BLAKE,

"The Father of the English Navy."

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

In Admiral Blake we have a signal instance of "natural bent of genius." With none of that preliminary service or experience which naval commanders deem essential to success, and with knowledge of the art of war save what was obtained by a comparatively brief training in the French navy, he stepped aboard the channel fleet. In 1649, to command the naval season. As his "master" Oliver Cromwell, sprung from the people, unheralded, to lead the Parliamentary forces to victory, so Blake came from the people to set aside all "royalty" in the sea service, and to make a new race of heroes out of the plebeian blood that gave "the Commonwealth" its life.

Robert Blake, eldest son of a merchant, was born at Bridgewater, England, in the year 1595. He received what was then termed "good school," and lived as a "gentleman" upon the means inherited from his father. As a representative of the trading interests of Bridgewater, he was sent to Parliament. But Parliament and Charles I were then at loggerheads. The king, following the precedents of arrogance, extravagance and encroachments on constitutional rights set by his father, James I, tried to force the House of Commons to ruinous expenditures, in sustaining an absurd policy; the Commons resisted stubbornly; Charles dissolved that Parliament, as he had done several others which had preceded, and the breach between the Royalists and Parliamentary men both widened and deepened.

Blake, having formally embraced "Puritan" views, found himself arrayed against royalty, from antagonism to its asserted prerogatives, and from religious and state social convictions; so that, when Charles called force to sustain his authority, and Parliament met force with fire, Blake very naturally drifted into the Parliamentary army. The great civil war that ensued enlisted all classes. It was a struggle of the Commons and the People against Royalty and Nobility, and of course aroused the keenest partisanship. Families, neighbors, communities divided on the issue. Charles found hearty supporters, and retainers enough to make up a formidable army, while his nephew, Prince Rupert, of Bavaria brought to his uncle's support large bodies of German and Italian mercenaries. The King of France, gave liberal material aid to arms, munitions and money. Europe, indeed, looked upon the contest with the liveliest interest, for kings, ministers and nobility saw in the struggle a principle that, if successful, might give courage to the people of all western Europe to make a struggle for constitutional liberty.

Blake was in Bristol, under Col. Fiennes, when that city surrendered to Prince Rupert, and was one of the leaders in the enterprise against Taunton—which city he was made governor. In 1645 he defended it against the royal forces under Goring, with such pertinacity to twice repulse him, that he finally held out against siege—a service that elicited the thanks of Parliament and a reward of honor.

Prince Rupert, though brave, was impetuous, rash, and lacking in military art. As chief of the royal cavalry, he lost the royalists the great battle on Marston Moor (July, 1644). Subsequently he surrendered Bristol to the conquering Parliamentary arms. Charles was then forced to deprive him of command on land, so assigned him to a fleet which his friends largely contributed to equip. It comprised a number of the best ships of the old navy, and was relied on, by the royalists, to keep the seaports town in subjection.

But the cause of Charles having perished by his fall and beheading (January, 1649), left Rupert as the chief representative of the royalists who now looked to the succession of Charles II—a design that Cromwell had to dread, for having been chiefly instrumental in calling Charles I to trial, he was master of the situation by his death, and did not propose to see royalty restored in the son of Charles. So he planned to rid the popular party of this danger. A Parliamentary fleet was organized in 1649-50, largely made up of merchant ships, and to this fleet army officers were detailed in the command—Colonel Blake, Deane and Popham, not one of whom had ever seen a ship in service. The Prince's vessel was lost in Kinsale harbor, Ireland. Thither Blake sailed, and blockaded the royal navy. Early in 1651 the Prince succeeded in getting his fleet out, but being pursued by Blake, took refuge in Lisbon, Portugal—then a neutral port. Blake quickly appeared off the harbor, but was refused permission to run up the Tagus to attack. He resented this by capturing a number of rich merchantmen. Parliament sustained this act of war by declaring hostilities against Portugal.

Taking advantage of Blake's temporary disappearance from the mouth of the Tagus, the Prince ran away from Lisbon to Malaga, Spain. Blake ran after him, and the Spanish authorities, but ran into the port of Cadiz. The Prince's vessel was captured by Blake, took refuge in the royal fleet. After a fierce but short fight he destroyed nearly all the Prince's vessels, and with no apology to Spain for the "outrage," sailed away for the Thames. For this he was made "Warden of the Cinque Ports," and with his fleet suppressed all royal authority in the English Channel islands.

In 1652, war with the Dutch was declared; Blake was made sole Admiral of the Channel fleet. Von Tromp, the noted Dutch admiral, was sent to destroy him. The fleets, about equally matched, met in the Downs. The Hollander, pursuing his usual mode of attack, ran down to catch Blake in his trap and thorough, but in an hour's time drew off, much the worse for his adventure. He found that he had something else to fight than Spanish conceit and dazzling uniforms.

Blake struck back by capturing Dutch fishing-smacks and a merchantman or two; so Von Tromp put out to engage the adventurous Englishman again, but a storm dispersed the fleets, and the Dutch returned to port.

These failures incensed the Holland government and Von Tromp was displaced by De Ruyter, but that old "sea-dog" did not venture out, and Von Tromp again assuming command, came upon Blake, Nov. 29th, off the Goodwin Sands. The Englishman, outweighed in guns and outnumbered in ships, was forced, with a loss of five of his best vessels, to retire into the Thames. Von Tromp celebrated his victory by affixing a broom at his masthead and sailing up and down the Channel. He returned to Amsterdam to receive the thanks of the States-General, while the English went to work to organize a fleet that would take the broom off the Dutchman's yard-arm, as well as destroy Holland's supremacy on the North Sea.

In February, 1653, Blake was ready with eight sail. The Dutch, too, had been busy, and Von Tromp and De Ruyter were then skimming the Channel with seventy sail, and convoying a great fleet of Holland merchantmen coming in from the south. Blake met this convoy off Capo la Hague, and then ensued one of the most prolonged and obstinate naval battles on record. For three days the antagonists fought—the Dutch to save their convoy and themselves—the English to capture the rich East Indians and to destroy the enemy's vessels. Blake had with him Deane and the famous General Monk (Duke of Albemarle). After three days' fighting the Dutch were beaten off, with a loss of eleven vessels-of-war and forty of their convoy—under the circumstances a success greatly to their honor. Blake lost but one ship.

In April of this year (1653) Oliver Cromwell made his coup and obtained possession of the Government. He had risen from obscurity to champion the people's cause, and by his wonderful display of military and executive ability had so won the mastery of the popular or Parliamentary cause as to be able, at the time named, to plant himself in the King's seat—a king under the thin guise of another title—that of Protector of the Commonwealth. The three admirals, in deference to what appeared to be the popular wish, assented to this appointment of supreme power. It is not to be said that Blake had state affairs, but to keep the foreigners from fooling us. And that was the keynote of his conduct. He fought for the honor of England, and it mattered little whether Cromwell or Parliament ordered.

June 3d Von Tromp and De Ruyter sought the English fleet again, off Newport met the ships of Monk, Deane, and Lawson—all under general command of Blake. The first day's fight was indecisive. On the second day the combat was renewed and the Dutch were defeated, retiring to Wellingen with considerable loss. They no longer carried the broom.

Cromwell received news with marked disconcern, and, for the first time, with some alarm, that Blake had given the English a success over the high seas, thus greatly strengthened the Commonwealth. As a mark of popular regard the admiral was returned as member of Parliament from Bridgewater, but sat out only part of the session. Cromwell, then virtually exercising supreme power, resolved upon making the English strength and prowess felt in the Mediterranean. He therefore equipped a powerful fleet, and giving Blake command the admiral sailed for Algiers, whose he forced to salute the flag. Proceeding to Tunis he made imperative demands of its Bey for the release of all English prisoners, a considerable number of whom were held as slaves to the insolent Moor. The Bey refused Blake's demands; whereupon the admiral proceeded to demolish the forts or castles of Goliata and Porto Ferino, by a bombardment that gave the Mohammedan tyrant a wholesome dread of "Christian dog."

A section of his fleet, under Captain Stayner, had blockaded Cadiz, Spain—the chief port of entry of the West India "plate" fleets that bore to Spain the treasure wrested from the wretched inhabitants of Mexico, South America and the West Indies. Into Spanish coffers was then flowing a steady stream of wealth—almost every cunct which represented the blood and suffering of the commerce of Spain.

Stayner caught one of these fleets coming in under cover, and after a brief battle took the two galleons and their escort—a ship-of-war, having on board a Spanish admiral and vice-admiral.

Learning that another fleet had put into the port of Santa Cruz, on the island of Tenerife, under the protection of its powerful forts, the fleet and treasure were thought to be safe, but Blake, taking twenty-four ships, resolved to destroy the escort and convoy. Arriving at Santa Cruz, he sailed directly into the harbor and ran down on the ships so closely that the land forts could not see him, without also injuring the Spanish vessels. Having armed "fire-boats," he dropped them to the Spaniard decks as he sailed by, and ere he left had set the whole fleet in flames. The Spaniards were literally slaughtered on their decks by the terrible broadsides, and the conflagration that followed consummated a victory that made Blake's name a literal sea terror.

His reception at home, on his return, was enthusiastic. Even Puritan stoicism unbent at the coming of one who, in a two years' cruise, had made a first-class power tremble at the British name, and had exalted the British navy to a position never before attained. Parliament honored him with a vote of thanks, and he was voted as a mark of its respect, a sword and ring worth five hundred pounds—equivalent to that sum in modern money. Puritan parsimony was not equal to the princely liberality which a later generation showered upon a Nelson.

Blake returned to Cadiz, which his fleet still blockaded, but the climate he had lately been serving in, and the arduous nature of the services he had been performing for five years, had greatly affected his health. He began to sail rapidly when he arrived off Cadiz (July, 1657) that his flag-ship turned homeward in August, but he died as the ship was entering the port of Plymouth, Aug. 27th, 1657.

The grand funerals were followed by the grand pageant of a public burial in Westminster Abbey, in Henry VII's chapel; but, with pitiful indecency, when Charles II, came to the throne, one of the earliest acts of royalty was to remove the remains from the Abbey and their burial, without ceremony, in the humble graveyard of St. Margaret's church, where they still repose.

Cromwell had been growing moody and tired of power for a year, when the admiral's death was announced. It affected him greatly; he never was his old self again. Not that he had specially loved Blake, but he saw in his death a warning, and he died in a year and a week from the admiral's decease.

Blake died in poverty. What he earned he spent freely among his men; the little fortune left him by his father was consumed in the civil war. His brilliant captures from the Dutch and Spanish, that should have enriched him with prize-money, he also gave away among his officers and crew. By such consideration for the interests of the sailors, as well as by his superior discipline, his masterly leadership and his almost sublime devotion to country, did he, in seven years, lift the British naval service from a lowly to a lofty position, and from his day dated that ascendancy of Britain on the seas, which made her one of the greatest of modern military powers.

The next day, she dressed with unusual care for her afternoon's visit to Mrs. Benedict, won the great admiration of the Spanish authorities, but ran into the port of Cadiz. The Prince's vessel was captured by Blake, took refuge in the royal navy. Early in 1651 the Prince succeeded in getting his fleet out, but being pursued by Blake, took refuge in Lisbon, Portugal—then a neutral port. Blake quickly appeared off the harbor, but was refused permission to run up the Tagus to attack. He resented this by capturing a number of rich merchantmen. Parliament sustained this act of war by declaring hostilities against Portugal.

Taking advantage of Blake's temporary disappearance from the mouth of the Tagus, the Prince ran away from Lisbon to Malaga, Spain. Blake ran after him, and the Spanish authorities, but ran into the port of Cadiz. The Prince's vessel was captured by Blake, took refuge in the royal fleet. After a fierce but short fight he destroyed nearly all the Prince's vessels, and with no apology to Spain for the "outrage," sailed away for the Thames.

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Cupid and House-Cleaning.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Mrs. WALTER AMMIDON laid his knife and fork down with a gesture of absolute despair.

"Not going to clean house again, Mrs. Benedict? Why, it seems as if we had only recovered from the dreadful tearing up process of last spring."

Mrs. Benedict slowly dropped four lumps of sugar into his coffee, then handed it to him, utterly regardless of the misery in his face.

"Dreadful tearing up!"—that's perfect nonsense, Mr. Ammidon! As if you were very much inconvenienced last May while the carpets were up and the shutters off and the cur-

tains down and the painting going on! Of course I shall clean this fall; it's my habit, and has been for twenty odd years."

Mr. Ammidon gave a little groan at the sad fate that awaited him—that awaited all bachelors in boarding-houses—in the shape of several consecutive days of bare floors, and the odor of soap and kalsomine; of cold dinners eaten whenever it was convenient to set the dining-table; of Mrs. Benedict in a chronic state of bustle and crossness, and the servants impudent, tired and sulky; of wide open doors and windows where the draughts tore through like floods—of par-

don't want his room any longer; and had his trunks packed and sent to the Grand Central Hotel.

Mr. Ammidon determined to kill two birds with one stone—to get out of the possibility of having to meet often Mrs. Benedict's friend, the pretty, merriest little woman, whom he had never loved another, and to make his home where house-cleaning was unknown. (No respect intended to the Grand Central.) And Bessie cried till her eyes were red and swollen, to think how entirely indifferent Mr. Ammidon was.

He was a gentleman, however, Mr. Ammidon.

"Well, 't'll be nice and sweet and clean," Mrs.

Benedict went on, with horrible cheerfulness, as she dashed the dessert, "and I've been thinking that I'll have your room newly papered, Mr. Ammidon. I'm sure you'll like that!"

"Very much—when it's done, madam. No custard, thank you."

And he cut his dinner short and rushed out of doors into the cool, fresh October evening air.

"Ah! bah! I can already experience the agonies of last spring. Good heaven, the woe!

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